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## **Senate Education Committee hears testimony on Sen. Van Woerkom's Junior ROTC legislation**

**LANSING** – Legislation that would clarify the law so schools could count their Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps classes as instructional time was brought before the Senate Education Committee Thursday, announced Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom, sponsor of the bill.

Senate Bill 77 would waive the requirement that JROTC instructors have to be state certified in order for classes they teach to count towards instructional time. JROTC instructors, all of whom served in the military, are qualified to teach based on military standards.

“Requiring JROTC instructors to have their teaching certificate in order for their classes to count as instructional time places an unnecessary burden on schools and students,” said Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores, “These classes are important for building character among young people and my bill helps ensure that students have the opportunity to continue participating in this program.”

For years, this type of instruction has been considered as instructional time. This practice was recently challenged, leaving the future of some programs in jeopardy. If passed, SB 77 would make it easier for schools to continue offering JROTC classes.

White Cloud High School Principal Tom Cameron, JROTC Instructor Russ Bachman and Al Brunsting, whose son was a participant in the JROTC, testified in favor of SB 77. They stated the legislation is necessary and addresses concerns they had when they faced the possibility of having to drop JROTC classes because their instructor was not a certified teacher.

The legislation passed the Senate Education Committee by a vote of 5-0. It now goes to the full Senate for consideration.

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